



Communications Office

The City of Morgantown

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City Completes Purchase of Property in Jerome Park to be known as “Paul Preserve”

The “Paul Preserve” was formerly the Jerome Park School Playground.

MORGANTOWN – The City of Morgantown has finalized the purchase of greenspace to be named in honor of the Morgantown man who envisioned the property as a park in the neighborhood.

In June, City Council approved the purchase of 2.056 acres of land at the corner of Denver Avenue and Mineral Street, known formerly as the old Jerome Park Elementary School Playground, from Sandy Paul Moore. This property has a long history of being a neighborhood gathering spot and play space, and the City intends to maintain that purpose by accepting it into the ranks of BOPARC’s many fine parks



Sandy Paul Moore and Harold “Scoop” Moore are sitting on the first of improvements to come to the newly-renamed Paul Preserve.

Moore’s father, James M. Paul, was a well-known demolition contractor, house mover, and landlord in Morgantown until he was 81 years old. His homestead stood in the place where the first WVU School of Music stood. He attended the Annapolis Training Academy then moved onto the Merchant Marines, where he reached the position of Lieutenant Commander and worked on cargo and liberty ships. After returning to Morgantown, he owned and operated Ideal Home Improvement and worked for the Department of Energy while he pursued his interests in demolition, contracting, and moving homes. One of his most notable contributions to the City was the donation of a house moved from WVU property in 1965 that now serves as the Caretaker’s Home at Krepps Park.

Paul purchased the Jerome Park School Playground property from the Monongalia Board of Education in 1995 after the K-3 school closed. His intention was to preserve it as greenspace for the neighborhood, and the City was able to help him in that endeavor. Paul leased the land to the City and BOPARC maintained the property with regular maintenance, mowing, repair, and cleaning in lieu of paying property taxes.

James Paul passed away in 2003. At that time, Moore became the joint owner of the property with her mother until her death in 2004. Moore said she was contacted several times by developers who wanted to buy the property, but she maintained that her father would have wanted it to stay a park - so she held firm.

Moore and the City were able to settle on a price and approved the final reading and adoption of an ordinance authorizing the City to purchase four parcels from her, specifically “for the purpose of creating a new city park in the Jerome Park Area of the City of Morgantown” (quoted from the ordinance.) She requested the naming rights to be a part of the purchase agreement. Moore and her family decided upon the name “Paul Preserve” to honor her father and his vision.

A portion of the purchase was provided by the U.S. Department of Interior’s Land & Water Conservation Program – a grant program created to help purchase property to be only used for outdoor recreation purposes.

This land purchase and naming does include the tiny parcel of land, 23’ x 45’, at the corner of the property, known as the Mayfield Mini-Park.

Mark Wise, Director of BOPARC, said that the City has been maintaining the property since before he took his position there with regular mowing, repair, grounds maintenance and litter pick-up. But now that the City owns the land, he says, there are plans for improvement.

“The tires and swing set and everything have been there since it was a school,” said Wise. “We have an opportunity to upgrade those pieces of equipment now that we own it.”

The park also features an asphalt surface with a basketball hoop and a fence along the back edge of the property. He said a resident has already contacted him with some improvement ideas, and in response, two new picnic tables have been placed in the shade along Denver Avenue within the last week.

If you have any questions, please contact the City Manager's office Monday through Friday between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. The number there is (304) 284-7405.





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